

September 12, 1960

President Dwight D. Eisenhower  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

The recent incidents involving the U-2 flight over the Soviet Union and the recent defection of two employees of the National Security Agency, along with the resultant revelations, caused considerable concern among the American people and our allies, on the status of our intelligence and security services.

In 1954 Brigadier General John N. Robinson, USA-Retired, one of your classmates at West Point, and I submitted a memorandum to you and a few high government officials in which we criticized the operations of our intelligence and security agencies. In the same memorandum we made suggestions for the improvement of these operations.

Following the submission of this memorandum you appointed a committee to survey certain intelligence and security agencies. Unfortunately, wittingly or unwittingly, the composition of the committee precluded any intensive review of these agencies. At least one member of the committee was associated with an organization holding substantial contracts with CIA, and the majority of the other members were known to



Mr. President, that you take immediate action to rectify the deplorable conditions existing within our intelligence and security agencies.

In the past we have been too complacent in viewing the importance of intelligence to our country. However, today nearly every citizen is becoming more familiar with this problem.

In my opinion the importance of our intelligence and security agencies is underscored by at least three considerations:

1. The survival of our nation and much of the rest of the world and the ability to maintain peace may well depend on our capability to detect and report potential enemy attacks. Without this warning our capability to retaliate is reduced to meaningless proportions. This inability, apparent today, reduces our power balance to a considerable degree.

2. Without proper intelligence we lack the capability to proceed in an orderly fashion in any long range planning affecting our foreign affairs and defense. Lack of intelligence has been very costly in terms of effort, money and effectiveness of policy.

3. Within our intelligence and security agencies we employ over 90,000 American citizens and expend over one billion dollars per year. The cost and dimension of this operation warrants a more serious consideration of this governmental effort.

From past experience I detected that high intelli-

-4-

gence and security officials tend to present an optimistic picture of our effort. I feel that in view of this massive and costly effort, the results attained are meager and disheartening. There are some fruitful results but the record of failures more than balances successful undertakings. In this connection I should point out that during the past ten years our national intelligence in general, and the CIA in particular failed to provide warnings and properly evaluate some of the most important overseas events.

I take a few incidents to support my point: The attack in Korea (1950), the entry of the Chinese Communists in the Korean Conflict (1950), the development of a thermonuclear weapon by the Soviet Union, the successors to power following the death of Stalin, the 1956 attack on the Suez Canal, the revolt in Iraq, recent events in Cuba, Turkey and Korea, the reaction to Vice President Nixon's trip to South America and other instances too numerous to mention here in detail. The record on the Soviet ICBM production and operational assignment is just as embarrassing.

During the attack on Suez in 1956, the American people were led to believe that adequate and timely warning was provided. A few months after this incident a U. S. Senate Committee attempted to ascertain the facts. The following information was recorded:

SENATOR MANSFIELD: Mr. Secretary (Mr. John Foster Dulles) the President in a speech on November 6, made the statement: The United States was not consulted in any way about any phase of these

actions-- referring to the attacks on Egypt-- nor were we informed of them in advance. Did we have knowledge of the Israeli attack against Egypt and the British-French assault on Egypt?

SECRETARY DULLES: We had no advance information of any kind. I think that statement of the President is entirely correct. After the Israelis went in full mobilization, we surmised something of that sort was coming, and the President then as you will recall, within a matter of hours, sent a message to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion. The British-French participation also came as complete surprise to us-- We had no advance knowledge.

SENATOR MANSFIELD: Of any of the three attacks?

SECRETARY DULLES: No Sir.

(U. S. Senate Hearings on the President's Proposals on the Middle East, Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Forces, 85th Congress, 1st Session, 1957, Part I, p. 446).

This episode may be somewhat disheartening to most Americans in view of the large amount of funds expended for intelligence every year; and this leads to another question. If national intelligence in general and CIA in particular are unable to warn us of a military attack in the Middle East, an area relatively easy to collect information, what are the possibilities of a warning on an attack staged from the Sino/Soviet Bloc? Unfortunately under present conditions prevailing in our intelligence my answer will be negative.

If we appreciate the failings of our intelligence and security agencies then the logical question should be, what can we do to rectify them.

A quick review of the Powers incident and the defection of the NSA employees may suggest that we have failed in our selection, training and security screening of some of our personnel. There are other areas, such as planning and

As a first step, we have to determine where we are before we chart a course towards our goals. Towards this end I suggest that a committee of knowledgeable, courageous and tough-minded individuals be appointed to survey all our intelligence and security agencies. It should be bi-partisan or non-partisan and should include certain individuals such as Senator Mansfield, Congressman Blatnik and Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. The recommendations of the committee should be followed and adopted.

If I may be permitted to use a personal remark, no intelligence or security agency can succeed unless the leadership is of the highest caliber. In the military services all too often a head of an intelligence organization is a "line officer". As highly as we prize our operational line officers they often lack the basic traits to become good intelligence and security officers and much less to lead such organizations. This is an intricate field requiring special abilities and many years of experience and unfortunately the majority of military officers leading intelligence organizations do not measure up to the requirements. In addition the rotation system practiced by the armed forces finds an officer in intelligence for 2-3 years and then in an operational command or staff position. This would be unthinkable among the British and the Soviet Intelligence systems.

The position of Director of the Central Intelligence merits special attention. Within 13 years the Central Intelligence

gence Agency had five Directors. Four of these Directors have been military officers who served a total of six years. This alone is a serious impediment. The present Director, Mr. Allen Dulles, is by far the best qualified, but he presents serious shortcomings, such as age, illness and administrative ineptness. Mr. Dulles has a fine record as an intelligence operative in the O.S.S. and CIA but to put it mildly "he is innocent of administration". For the past few weeks Mr. Dulles has been advocating that a course in the theory and practice of command be introduced in American schools. However, although he is aware of this need he failed to consider the requirement in the selection of Mr. Powers as an employee of his agency and worse, he failed to provide this training while Mr. Powers was employed by his agency.

In all due respect to Mr. Dulles' excellent accomplishments as an intelligence operative, given the authority I would not appoint him as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

What is needed now in CIA is a younger man who has outstanding knowledge of security and intelligence and the required administrative aptitude to administer an agency which according to a national magazine employs 15,000 American citizens and whose annual budget approximates 500 million dollars. I suggest that we should do with the CIA what was done with the FBI 30 years ago. Then Mr. J. Edgar Hoover took over a faltering and inept FBI. By careful selection of personnel and very careful training and development, he has made the FBI into one of the best agencies of its kind in the world.

Another apparent need is the organization of a Congressional Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Agencies. There appears to be opposition in some places to this suggestion on the grounds of security. This is somewhat illogical in view of the fact that there exist committees of cognizance over the FBI and the Atomic Energy Commission and where to my knowledge there has never been a security violation.

I believe it is too dangerous to allow agencies functioning with so much freedom and able to spend, on an unbalanced basis, hundreds of millions of dollars, such as CIA, without the basic checks provided by our government on the legislative and executive. You, Sir, as the President, have supervision over many departments and agencies of the government and undoubtedly can not master the time required to give maximum supervision to all of them. If something escapes you or a future President, Congress is there to provide this supervision when budgetary matters are involved. I find it hard to understand that you would deprive Congress of the right to supervise the operations of an agency of the government and then request that hundreds of millions of dollars be appropriated without a detailed analysis of the expenditures involved. Intelligence agencies are a necessary evil but one which might proceed far without proper checks and supervision.

Finally, I wish to point out that you and most Americans wish to exercise economy in the government. In the areas of foreign relations and defense we have expended



-9-

ing fiscal 1959 approximately 46 billion dollars. Good intelligence can provide better planning in these areas and effect savings of billions of dollars. My view is that good intelligence is good business and I am dedicated to seeing that our country develops a good intelligence system for otherwise we are to be faced with catastrophic events and the squandering of billions of dollars.

It is my hope, Mr. President, that you take the necessary steps to improve our intelligence and security agencies. I will be glad to provide you with a confidential analysis and recommendation on matters which I can not discuss in this unclassified letter, which I believe may improve our present operations.

I remain,

Respectfully Yours,

JAMES KELLIS,  
Colonel, USAF-Retired.